

**Celebrating Your Success:  
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

## **Appendix D– HUSSC Award Celebration Press Release**

A well-worded press release is a wonderful way to share the good news about your school's HUSSC Award and garner community support for your wellness efforts.

To assure a consistent and accurate message United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Team Nutrition has developed a Press Release Template. Please work with the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and Montana Team Nutrition staff to prepare and approve a press release. MT OPI will help in distributing the press release to media outlets of your choice.

This Appendix contains a copy of the USDA Team Nutrition HUSSC Award Press Release Template. Note that the information highlighted in yellow must appear in the press release that you compose. Three HUSSC Award press releases specific to Montana schools are also included in the Appendix. Note that the press releases from Gallatin Gateway and Townsend are for multiple schools.

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**INSERT SCHOOL LOGO  
or  
USE SCHOOL STATIONARY**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Contact:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Contact name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Title, e.g., School Nutrition Director)

\_\_\_\_\_ (School name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Telephone number)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Fax number)

\_\_\_\_\_ (E-mail address)

\_\_\_\_\_(insert school name)\_\_\_\_\_ **School meets the HealthierUS School Challenge**

\_\_\_\_\_(city), \_\_\_\_\_(state) – \_\_\_\_\_(date)

\_\_\_\_\_(insert school name)\_\_\_\_\_ School is making national news by working to support and improve the health of our children and our community. As part of their effort, healthy items are featured on their menus and physical education and activity emphasized. Their efforts are part of the HealthierUS School Challenge.

The HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) is a voluntary national certification initiative for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. It supports First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign by recognizing schools that are creating healthier school environments through their promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Sponsored by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the initiative encourages all schools take a leadership

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role in helping students to make healthier eating and physical activity choices that will last a lifetime. Schools, such as \_\_\_\_\_(insert name of school)\_\_\_\_\_, that champion the HUSSC work hard to make changes to their school nutrition environment in order to (1) improve the quality of the foods served, (2) provide students with nutrition education, and (3) provide students with physical education and opportunities for physical activity.

Ultimately, FNS would like to see all schools receive a HUSSC award at any one of the four levels of superior performance: Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Gold Award of Distinction. Schools awarded receive a monetary incentive (Bronze \$500, Silver \$1000, Gold \$1500, and Gold Award of Distinction \$2000), an award plaque signed by a USDA official, a banner to display in their school, and their name listed on the Team Nutrition Web site.

To qualify for an award, a school must submit a formal application and meet basic criteria set forth by the FNS. The HUSSC criteria reflect the recommendations of the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published recommendations (April 2007) for foods that should be served in schools, outside of the organized school lunch meals. HealthierUS Schools must also have a local school wellness policy, as mandated by Congress. Schools receiving a HUSSC award commit to meeting the criteria throughout their four year certification period.

The \_\_\_\_\_(insert school name)\_\_\_\_\_ School qualified for the \_\_\_\_\_(insert award level)\_\_\_\_\_. USDA's \_\_\_\_\_(insert name and title)\_\_\_\_\_ will visit \_\_\_\_\_(insert school name)\_\_\_\_\_ School on \_\_\_\_\_(date)\_\_\_\_\_ to present the official award.

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The HUSSC application process was led by           (Name and title)          . A team of school professionals and a representative of the parent organization reviewed the application and included           (names)          . Special recognition is also due to the school nutrition staff for their efforts in achieving school lunch menu changes leading to a HUSSC (Insert award type) award.

**Celebrating Your Success:  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 26, 2012

Contacts: Allyson Hagen, OPI, 406-444-3160, [ahagen2@mt.gov](mailto:ahagen2@mt.gov)  
Therese Picasso Edwards, RD, Luther School Wellness Committee Member  
406-446-2480, [theresepicasso@gmail.com](mailto:theresepicasso@gmail.com)

**Luther School Celebrates National Healthy Schools Award  
*Small School First in Montana to Receive Gold Award with Distinction***

(Luther, MT) Luther School improved on their previously earned Silver HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) certification to become the first school in Montana to receive the HealthierUS School Challenge Gold with Distinction Award in recognition of its outstanding commitment to student health. The Gold Award with Distinction is the highest level possible for this national award. Luther School will receive a \$2,000 monetary award from the United States Department of Agriculture for their success.

Said Superintendent Juneau, "Healthy students are better prepared for success in the classroom. Luther School is helping students develop healthier eating and physical activity choices that will last a lifetime."

Luther School, a small school with 30 students, is one of thirteen schools in Montana to receive a HUSSC award since 2006. The HealthierUS School Challenge program recognizes schools that are creating healthy environments by promoting excellence in nutrition and physical activity.

Luther's school menu features colorful, healthy items prepared from scratch using fresh, local foods. Amy Russell, the School Food Service Director, does it all - from creating the monthly menu, to trying new recipes, grocery shopping, serving meals and cleaning up. Luther students enjoy a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, lean protein choices and whole grain foods daily.

Janis Eckert, Luther's Lead Teacher, states, "Healthy eating habits are the foundation for an optimum learning environment. It is wonderful that the parents, students, and staff are recognizing the multiple benefits associated with a nutritious lunch program. We, as a school community, are proud to be the first in Montana to obtain this goal."

Opportunities for physical activity are woven into all areas of the curriculum, not just physical education class. Students participate in lifetime activities such as downhill skiing, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, walking and bicycling.

The rigorous HUSSC application process was led by a local dietitian and School Wellness Committee Member, Therese Picasso Edwards, the School Food Service Director, Amy Russell,

**Celebrating Your Success:  
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with support from Lead Teacher Janis Eckert and other Wellness Committee Members including Barbara Dykema and Margie Adams.

**Montana Office of Public Instruction officials will present the award to Luther School on Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. and participate in a school-wide celebration. Parents and community members are invited to attend the award celebration.**

**Celebrating Your Success:  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*February 21, 2012*

**Contacts:**

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Dr. Kimberly DeBruycker, Superintendent, Gallatin Gateway School

406-763-4415, [debruyster@gallatingatewayschool.com](mailto:debruyster@gallatingatewayschool.com) <mailto:ajohnson@townsend.k12.mt.us>

**Gallatin Gateway School Celebrates National  
Healthy Schools Gold-Level Award**

(Gallatin Gateway, MT) Gallatin Gateway School in Gallatin Gateway, Montana, joined an exclusive national group last month, earning two prestigious Gold Awards in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) program.

The HealthierUS School Challenge program recognizes schools that are creating healthy environments by promoting excellence in nutrition and physical activity. Gallatin Gateway School is one of eleven schools in Montana to receive a HUSSC award since 2006. Dr. DeBruycker, said, "Our school is excited to be receiving these two awards. I am so proud of the healthy lifestyle habits being taught by our staff and in turn, displayed by our students."

Superintendent Juneau said, "Schools receiving these awards are models for schools across the state because they demonstrate their commitment to the health and wellness of Montana children. Children who eat healthy meals and are active are better prepared for success in the classroom."

To qualify for the Gold award, Gallatin Gateway School submitted two detailed applications documenting adherence to the HealthierUS School Challenge criteria for their lunch menus, nutrition education, opportunities for physical activity, and a local school wellness policy. Dr. Kimberly DeBruycker, Superintendent, and Chef Jason Moore, Food Service Manager led the HUSSC application process, along with broad-based support from the school's health and physical activity staff including Mrs. Elizabeth Matthews, Mr. Mike Coon, and Mr. Joe Mohr. The school will receive \$3000 from USDA to support their school meals program. One award is for the K-6 meals program and the other for the 7-8 meals program.

Gallatin Gateway school meals are prepared from scratch with a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, low fat dairy foods, lean protein choices and whole grain foods. Chef Moore and assistant cook/head baker Mrs. Bobbi Jo Gunderson serve tasty meals, which the students eat and enjoy. "These are not your ordinary or traditional school meals!" Chef Jason Moore stated. "We survey our students and work to prepare the kind of healthy meals they will enjoy."

This school is remarkable for its exceptional approach to making mealtime at school pleasant for both students and adults. The mealtime atmosphere is just as important as the meal itself. Gallatin Gateway School has created a comfortable cafeteria in which students and adults enjoy mealtime together and students learn to become competent eaters. Gallatin Gateway School is featured in a national training DVD, *Comfortable Cafeterias*,

[http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School\\_Nutrition/MTTeam.html#gpm1\\_7](http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/MTTeam.html#gpm1_7)

**Celebrating Your Success:  
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The high priority placed on physical activity and physical education along with innovative programs to increase students' physical activity were another key reason for the Gold recognition of Gallatin Gateway School. Health enhancement teachers, Mr. Mohr and Mr. Coon, have been instrumental in creating fun ways to get kids up and moving, such as school-wide fit days, walk to school days, get-fit activities and more. Both intramural and interscholastic sport options are available for students in grades 5-8.

**Montana Office of Public Instruction officials will present the award to Gallatin Gateway School on Tuesday, March 6, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. and participate in a school-wide celebration with a special lunch meal following. In celebration of National School Breakfast Week, Gallatin Gateway School will be serving a student favorite – *Breakfast for Lunch*. Parents and community members are invited to attend the award celebration and lunch.**



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2012

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Andrea Johnson, Superintendent, Townsend Schools

406-441-3454, [ajohnson@townsend.k12.mt.us](mailto:ajohnson@townsend.k12.mt.us)

**Townsend Schools Celebrate National Healthy Schools Award**

(Townsend, MT) Cecelia Hazelton Elementary School and Townsend Junior High School in Townsend, Montana, joined an exclusive national group last month, earning prestigious Silver Awards in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) program.

The HealthierUS School Challenge program recognizes schools that are creating healthy environments by promoting excellence in nutrition and physical activity. Townsend Schools are one of nine schools in Montana to receive a HUSSC award since 2006.

Superintendent Juneau said, "Schools receiving these awards are models for schools across the state because they demonstrate their commitment to the health and wellness of Montana children. Children who eat healthy meals and are active are better prepared for success in the classroom."

To qualify for the Silver award, Townsend Schools submitted a detailed application documenting adherence to the HealthierUS School Challenge criteria for their lunch menus, nutrition education, opportunities for physical activity, and a local school wellness policy. The HUSSC application process was led by Vicki Thomason, School Food Service Director. Townsend School lunches offer a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables through a daily salad and fruit bar, low fat dairy foods, lean protein choices and whole grain foods.

Brad Racht, Townsend Junior High Principal said, "We are very proud of this award. Mrs. Thomason and her staff have worked very hard to provide healthy lunch options for our students. She is consistently trying to improve the lunch program and seeks student input." He continued, "Our entire teaching staff has demonstrated a commitment to physical activity and healthy choices."

Stated Townsend Superintendent Andrea Johnson, "Healthy nutrition and physical activity are both extremely important for our students to feel good and learn. I am excited that the district met the criteria for the Silver Awards – now we can work for the Gold!"

The high priority placed on physical activity and physical education along with innovative programs to increase students' physical activity were another key reason for the Silver recognition of Townsend Schools. Health enhancement teacher Vicki Harvey has been instrumental in creating fun ways to get kids up and moving, such as school-wide fit days. Both intramural and interscholastic sport options are available for students in Grades 6-8.

**Celebrating Your Success:  
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**Montana Office of Public Instruction officials will present the award to Townsend Schools on Tuesday, February 7, 2012, 2:00-2:55 p.m. in the new high school gym and participate in a school-wide celebration. Parents and community members are invited to attend the award celebration.**

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